

Communities and Conventional Munitions Demilitarization

Lenny Siegel

Center for Public Environmental Oversight

National Research Council

August, 2017

Editorials/Letters

San Jose Mercury News



LARRY JINKS
President and Publisher

ROBERT D. DINGLE, Senior Vice President and Executive Editor
JEROME W. CEFOR, Managing Editor

ROB ELDER, Vice President and Editor

KATHY YATES, Senior Vice President/General Manager
DEAN R. BARTER, Senior Vice President
JOHN B. HAMMETT, Senior Vice President
GERALD H. FOLK, Vice President/Operations
BRUCE A. CUNNINGHAM, Vice President/Chief Financial Officer

TIMOTHY J. ALLDRIDGE, Marketing Director
RONALD C. BEACH, Classified Advertising Director
ROBERT C. WILLIAMSON, Display Advertising Director

Editorials

Friday, April 6, 1990

• • • C 68

Fueling a controversy

The air board is right to
check United Technologies'
burning of rocket fuel

BURNING trash in a open pit is against the law; burning rocket fuel isn't.

United Technologies Corp. has had permission from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to burn rocket fuel at its San Jose plant on Metcalf Road on the grounds that the fuel is too explosive to transport and dispose of any other way.

Some air district board members are skeptical of that now. They ought to be perpetually skeptical.

As soon as an alternative to open burning is available, it should be mandated, even if it's as basic as burning the fuel somewhere more remote. This is an urban area that doesn't meet federal air quality standards.

The air district thought United Technologies was burning only rocket fuel produced locally. In 1986, it discovered the company was burning fuel from old rock-

ets imported from Utah for reconditioning. The amount of fuel and waste burned was up to five times greater than the company had told the district, in 1984, it would burn.

Belatedly, but appropriately, the air district has halted the burning of imported fuel, arguing that it can be taken out of the rockets before they're brought to San Jose. The district has withdrawn its authorization to use four newer pits added to the original six in 1985. At meeting of the air district board Wednesday, members said they were considering a ban on the open burning.

Burning rocket fuel releases nitrogen oxides, a component of smog, into the air. It may also release dioxins, hydrogen chloride and aluminum oxide, although reliable data on the composition of the emissions doesn't exist.

At a time when the State Air Resources Board is considering restricting spray deodorants because they contribute to air pollution, any open burning should get the strictest scrutiny.

"We're coming down on the little guys," said air board member Al Aramburu, "and here's a guy doing the equivalent of throwing open sewage down the street."

Various types of OB/OD

- *Conventional stockpile demilitarization*
- Production waste
- Old ammo plants
- Range recovered munitions
- Solid rocket fuel
- Hazardous waste (with firefighting foam)
- Captured/ceded stockpiles
- In-theater wastes

Reasons why OB/OD is used

- Lack of regulation
- Cost
- Convenience
- Lack of good exposure data
- Speed
- Safety?

There is not only a need to develop and improve alternative technologies for the demilitarization of conventional munitions, but to encourage installations and activities to utilize them and regulators to approve them.

Affected communities have been asking for alternatives.

Cease Fire Campaign

- 60 social justice, environmental health, tribal, veterans service and conservation groups have endorsed the Cease Fire Campaign's goal statement.
- The CEASE FIRE Campaign seeks to protect human health and the environment by calling for the immediate implementation of safer alternatives to open air burning, detonation and non-closed loop incineration/combustion of military munitions....

An opportunity for community engagement

- Build trust
- Share information
- Recognize community-based expertise
- Engage in joint problem-solving
- Prepare to work with diverse constituencies

National Models

- Work with existing campaigns
- Existing national conferences
- Dedicated national conferences
- Webinars
- Advisory committees (Core Group)
- Address the transportation of munitions and munitions waste

Local Models

- Citizens' Advisory Commissions
- Restoration Advisory Boards
- Camp Minden Dialogue Committee
 - Inclusion of community-oriented scientists in technical discussions
 - See the 13 Attributes for a Successful Approach to Cleanup

Key Features of Successful Dialogues

- Early and often participation
- Knowledgeable facilitators
- Travel support for national meetings
- Agreement that the outcome is advisory
- Joint problem-solving approach
- Open but not broadcast
- Include a wide range of stakeholders

Lenny Siegel

Center for Public Environmental Oversight

c/o PSC, P.O. Box 998

Mountain View, CA 94042

Voice and Fax: 650/961-8918

LSiegel@cpeo.org — <http://www.cpeo.org>